

# 62nd Engineer Makes a Difference

08/10/2009

by Perry Jefferies, Blood Donor Recruiter, Fort Hood, TX

Cpt. Kristy Norquist encourages her troops to donate blood at the Robertson Blood Center on Wednesday, July 8, 2009, Fort Hood.

Cpt. Kristy Norquist arranged an Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) blood drive for her Soldiers assigned to the rear detachment for the 62nd Engineer Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas.

The young commander, originally from Ohio, said the Central Texas heat had taken “some getting used to” so she arranged the blood drive for early morning. “My brigade commander encouraged me to come. I have the prime pool of Soldiers and was glad for the chance to donate.” The 62nd Engineer Battalion, assigned to the 36th Engineer Brigade on Fort Hood, is frequently deployed. Since the start of the Long War, the 36th Engineer Brigade almost always has at least one unit assigned to duty out of the country.



Some of her Soldiers were past blood donors, like Pfc. Jeffrey Maloney, a heavy equipment operator who said, “I’ve done it before. I do it to help out.”

For others, like Pvt. Richard White, it was the first time. “It is definitely different but definitely a good experience.”

Many units on Fort Hood are deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan but most have a rear detachment. Although the deferral rates from donation are higher in these units, most have some eligible Soldiers, especially the people who have recently arrived from training and are waiting to deploy. In the case of Cpt. Norquist’s unit, more than 50 of the detachment were eligible to donate and over 40 units of blood passed screening and testing to be shipped overseas.

The unit held their morning formation at the blood donor center. Personnel from the donor center screened out the most common deferrals and asked for volunteers from those eligible. Almost all of the eligible Soldiers donated blood that morning.

The Soldiers appreciated the fact that most of their blood donations would be available in theater in about five days. “I just came to donate blood and see what it’s all about,” said Pvt. Collin Stewart. “It’s going to a good place.”